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ND Senior Career Development

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Foster Grandparent Program

Volunteer Handbook

Version: 2024.04.03

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Dear Foster Grandparent Program volunteer,

Thank you for choosing to donate your time to the Foster Grandparent Program. The Foster Grandparent Program provides volunteer opportunities for individuals 55 years and older to mentor children one-on-one and help them with their identified special needs. It is also an opportunity for volunteers to learn new skills, share expertise and gain useful experience.

ND Senior Career Development considers volunteers a part of its family and recognizes that you have special skills, talents, and certain goals you wish to attain as well as experiences you like to share. We aim to meet your needs and interests whenever possible.

We appreciate and are very grateful for your time and your talents. We hope in your tenure as a Foster Grandparent you will acquire treasured assets like new relationships, accomplishments, gratification, and happiness.

This handbook provides basic information about the Foster Grandparent Program. The handbook is written in compliance with the policies and regulations of AmeriCorps Seniors and the Foster Grandparent Program.

The policies in this handbook replace any others that precede them. Since it is impossible to anticipate every situation, special circumstances that are not covered in the handbook will be addressed by the Foster Grandparent Staff. Changes in these policies may occur as the Program evolves and as AmeriCorps Seniors makes changes to its policies and regulations. You may periodically receive updated pages of the handbook to reflect any changes.

*Thank you for being a Foster Grandparent!*

Program Staff – ND Senior Career Development (NDSCD):

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### HISTORY OF FOSTER GRANDPARENT PROGRAM

Since 1965, the Foster Grandparent Program has provided one-on-one mentoring, nurturing, and support to children with special or exceptional needs, or who are in circumstances that limit their academic, social, or emotional development. Foster Grandparents serve from 5 to 40 hours a week and receive hourly stipends. Foster Grandparents must be age 55 or older and meet established income eligibility guidelines. As long as funds are available, in addition to the stipend, they receive accident, personal liability, and excess automobile liability insurance; assistance with the cost of transportation; recognition; and, as feasible, meals during their assignments. Foster Grandparents are volunteers, and are not employees of the sponsor, the volunteer station, AmeriCorps Seniors, or the Federal Government.

### AMERICORPS OVERVIEW

In 1993, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) was established under the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993 to connect Americans of all ages and backgrounds with opportunities to give back to their communities and their nation. It merged the work and staffs of two predecessor agencies, ACTION and the Commission on National and Community Service. On September 30, 2021, the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) rebranded to AmeriCorps. The Foster Grandparent Program is an AmeriCorps Seniors program.

Today AmeriCorps serves more than 5 million individuals of all ages and backgrounds help meet local needs through a wide array of service opportunities. These include projects in six priority areas: disaster services, economic opportunity, education, environmental stewardship, healthy futures, and veterans and military families. AmeriCorps is part of our nation’s history of commitment to building a culture of citizenship, service, and responsibility. For more information on the history of AmeriCorps see the National Service Timeline. To learn more about AmeriCorps please visit https://www.americorps.gov/.

### SPONSORSHIP

ND Senior Career Development (NDSCD) serves as the sponsoring Agency and is responsible for the management of the Foster Grandparent Program in Western North Dakota. The Foster Grandparent Program is funded by the federal government as well as private and public donations.

### PROGRAM STAFF

ND Senior Career Development (NDSCD):

Lyle Koller – Program Director

Ashley MacLean – Program Administrator

Tiffany Mills – Coordinator

### GOALS

Foster Grandparents are role models, mentors, and friends to children with special and exceptional needs, or who are in circumstances that limit their academic, social, or emotional development. Achievement of FGP's purpose is facilitated by the coordination of the resources of AmeriCorps, the FGP sponsor, and the community to fulfill the following goals of FGP:

1) Develop opportunities for older people willing to share their experience, abilities, and skills for the betterment of their community and themselves to serve children and youth in their communities.

2) Ensure that volunteer assignments are consistent with the interests and abilities of the volunteers, and the needs of the community served.

3) Ensure that volunteers are provided needed orientation, in-service instruction, individual support and supervision, and recognition for their volunteer service.

4) Provide reasonable opportunity for community and volunteer involvement and support in development, operation, and appraisal of the FGP project.

5) Develop local support to supplement available federal sources and ensure that program expenditures are incurred at the lowest possible cost consistent with the effective operation of the project, as required by AmeriCorps's legislation.

6) Cooperate with agencies and organizations involved in the fields of aging and volunteerism.

7) Develop a sound, locally controlled senior volunteer program with continuing community support.

### FOSTER GRANDPARENT VOLUNTEER ELIGIBILITY

Foster Grandparents must be 55 years of age or older who meet income eligibility, (not exceeding 200% of current federal poverty guidelines), the required background checks, and be capable of serving children with exceptional or special needs, or children who are in circumstances that limit their academic, social, or emotional development. Foster Grandparents must be able to provide such service without detriment to either themselves or the children served and be willing to abide by the Foster Grandparent Program requirements.

### INCOME ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENT

To be enrolled and receive a stipend, a Foster Grandparent cannot have an annual income, from all sources, deducting allowable medical expenses that exceeds the income eligibility guideline for the state in which he or she resides. The income eligibility guideline for each State is 200 percent of the poverty line.

### BACKGROUND CHECKS

AmeriCorps requires ND Senior Career Development to perform a National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) for all FGP volunteers who will have contact on a recurring basis with children aged 17 years or younger, to individuals aged 60 years or older, or to individuals with disabilities. This process includes a state criminal history check, National Sex Offender Public Website (NSOPW) check, and FBI fingerprint-based criminal history check. Results from all background checks are taken into account when hiring volunteers.

An ineligible FGP volunteer is anyone who (1) is registered or required to be registered on a sex offender registry, (2) has been convicted of murder, (3) refuses to consent to the National Service Criminal History Check (NSCHC) requirement or (4) makes a false statement in connection with their NSCHC.

The NSCHC requires that NDSCD follows the policies and practices outlined below with regards to all Foster Grandparent background checks:

1. Verify volunteer identity using government-issued photo identification.
2. Document that volunteers have been informed that because they are serving in a grant-funded position, they are subject to the checks.
3. Secure written consent from the volunteer to perform background checks.
4. Implement safeguards to ensure the confidentiality of any information relating to the checks, consistent with the authorization provided by the volunteer.
5. Ensure the cost of all checks is covered by the program.
6. Ensure that required background checks (NSOPW, FBI fingerprint, and state criminal history checks) are completed before the start of volunteer service.
7. Retain the results of each background check in a safe, secure location.
8. Provide a reasonable opportunity for volunteers to review/challenge the factual accuracy of a result before excluding them from volunteering.

An additional NSCHC is required each time when a volunteer has a break in service longer than 180 days.

A break in service means that a person is no longer providing service through or receiving salary from a recipient or subrecipient. A temporary interruption of work or service without termination of employment or expiration of the agreement under which service is being provided is not a break in service.

*An example of a* ***temporary interruption*** *would be: If an AmeriCorps Seniors volunteer who receives a stipend has run out of leave and is on leave without pay, the grant recipient should maintain documentation to show that the person is on leave status rather than terminated from the program.*

Documentation must be recorded for any break in service or temporary interruption of work or service. This documentation will be filed in the volunteer’s file and as a grant record.

### DISQUALIFICATIONS

1. AmeriCorps requirements specify that individuals are ineligible to serve as a Foster Grandparents if they are:

a) Listed, or required to be listed, on a sex offender registry

b) Convicted of murder as defined and described in 18 U.S.C. § 1111

c) Unwilling to consent to the NSCHC

d) Found to have made a false statement in connection with a program’s inquiry concerning the individual’s criminal history

2) Grantees may adopt written project policies that include other disqualifying offenses

### NON-DISCRIMINATION

From Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Eligibility to serve as a Foster Grandparent shall not be restricted on the basis of formal education, experience, race, color, national origin including limited English proficiency, gender, age, religion, sexual orientation, disability, gender identity or expression, political affiliation, marital or parental status, or military service.

### NON-STIPENDED FGP VOLUNTEERS

Persons aged 55 or older with incomes that exceed eligibility guidelines may be enrolled in FGP projects as non-stipended volunteers. Non-stipended volunteers may serve alongside stipended volunteers and all FGP volunteers must be treated consistently and equitably. In other words, non-stipended FGP volunteers should be able to serve in FGP projects without barriers. Further, AmeriCorps encourages FGP projects to engage non-stipended FGP volunteers in service when opportunities are available and when the regulatory conditions detailed below are met.

The following conditions apply to the service of non-stipended Foster Grandparents:

• Non-stipended Foster Grandparents must not displace or prevent eligible low-income individuals from becoming Foster Grandparents.

• No special privilege or status is granted or created among Foster Grandparents, whether stipended or non-stipended, and equal treatment is required.

• Training, supervision, and other support services and cost reimbursements, other than the stipend, are made available equally to all Foster Grandparents.

• All regulations and requirements applicable to the program apply to all Foster Grandparents.

• Non-stipended Foster Grandparents may contribute the costs they incur in connection with their participation in the program.

• Sponsors provide non-stipended Foster Grandparents with all of the cost reimbursements, except for the stipend, that stipended Foster Grandparent receive, as they should be treated equally.

If non-stipended FGP volunteers choose not to accept cost reimbursements from the sponsor e.g. transportation and/or meal reimbursements, they may do so. This forfeiture of cost reimbursements may indirectly contribute to costs to the program. Sponsors are not required to enroll non-stipended Foster Grandparents in their program.

The role of non-Stipended Foster Grandparents serving in the Foster Grandparent Program must serve in the same roles as stipended volunteers. Non-stipended Foster Grandparent assignments must provide support and/or facilitate access to services and resources that contribute to improved academic, social, or emotional development outcomes for children served. The assignments and activities must involve person-to-person supportive relationships with the children served. Each non-stipended Foster Grandparent must be assigned to individual children and should include activities that lead to measurable outcomes.

### VOLUNTEER SAFETY

It is not the intent of the program nor is it the role of the volunteer to engage in activities that would place them in an unsafe, hazardous environment where they would be at risk of exposure, direct contact with infectious/hazardous wastes (blood, bodily fluids) or mental/physical harm. Foster Grandparent Program volunteers are encouraged to act with caution while on duty and immediately report any unsafe or hazardous conditions to their volunteer station supervisor or Program Director.

### ORIENTATION AND TRAINING OF FOSTER GRANDPARENT VOLUNTEERS

For each volunteer’s first year of service, the sponsor must provide:

• A minimum of 20 hours of pre-serviceorientation

• A minimum of 24 hours of in-service training annually

After the volunteer’s first year of service, and for each successive year, the sponsor must provide a minimum of 24 hours of in-service training annually to its volunteers.

Attendance at pre-service orientation, in-service training, and recognition events are also considered official project activities or events. Hours served in support of these activities or events count toward the minimum and maximum service requirements and volunteers should receive stipends for them, consistent with sponsor policies and procedures.

### PROBATIONARY PERIOD

There is a probationary period of 90 days, at which time a verbal phone call check to the volunteer station will be made.

Random checks with volunteer stations will be made as needed to check on progress of volunteer compatibility as well as Assignment Plan progress.

### SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

A Foster Grandparent will serve a minimum of 260 hours annually, or a minimum of 5 hours per week. A Foster Grandparent may serve a maximum of 2080 hours annually, or a maximum of 40 hours per week. Within these limitations, a sponsor may set service policies consistent with local needs.

### VOLUNTEER STATIONS

A volunteer station is a public agency, secular or faith-based private non-profit organization, or proprietary health care organization that accepts the responsibility for assignment and supervision of FGP volunteers. Each volunteer station must be licensed or otherwise certified, when required, by the appropriate state or local government. Neither informal groups nor private homes qualify as volunteer stations.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| |  |  | | --- | --- | | Examples of Volunteer Stations | | | Before/After School Programs | Head Start Centers | | Development Disability Centers | Juvenile Corrections Centers | | Foster Care Agencies | Charter Schools | | Elementary Schools | Secondary Schools | |

### VOLUNTEER STATION RESPONSIBILITIES

Individual volunteer Assignment Plans are required for all Foster Grandparents. Assignment Plans are developed by the volunteer station in collaboration with the FGP project staff. The Assignment Plan must be approved and signed by the project staff on behalf of the sponsor, station representative, and the volunteer. If verification of the child’s need is included in the assignment plan, the plan must be signed by the appropriate professional.

Development of volunteer Assignment Plans:

The following steps are recommended to develop volunteer Assignment Plans:

a) Identify prospective children to be served;

b) Document the specific need(s) of the child as verified by an appropriate professional;

c) Describe the activities the Foster Grandparent will perform, the schedule for their performance, and the supervisory relationship between the volunteer and the volunteer station;

d) Describe the expected results of the Foster Grandparent's activities;

e) Describe the expected impact on the child of attaining the expected results; and

f) Format the assignment plan, to show, by their respective signatures, the acceptance of the plan by the Foster Grandparent and approval by project and station staff.

Management of Assignment Plans:

a) FGP volunteer Assignment Plans should be reviewed periodically to ensure that they remain current and appropriate for the Foster Grandparents and their clients.

b) Annually, a review of each Foster Grandparent Program volunteer's impact should be performed, which examines:

i) The child’s needs;

ii) The service activities performed, adjustments made, and potential areas for improvement;

iii) Adherence to planned schedule and adjustments made;

iv) Results or accomplishments achieved; and

v) Impact on the child.

### VOLUNTEER STATION SUPERVISION OF FOSTER GRANDPARENTS

Volunteer stations are responsible for the daily supervision of Foster Grandparents on assignment. The quality of supervision or support is the most critical factor, after the assignment itself, in contributing to the success of the Foster Grandparent experience. Supervision should be on going and constructive. The volunteer station supervisor may be a different staff member than the station representative who signs the Memorandum of Understanding. Supervision includes:

1) Development of individual volunteer Assignment Plan(s) in collaboration with project staff.

2) Providing regular and on-site supervision of Foster Grandparent performance on assignments.

3) Monitoring of volunteer activities regularly to ensure that Foster Grandparents and children are satisfied with the assignment and, with project staff, determine the continued appropriateness of the assignment.

4) Annually completing a volunteer performance evaluation.

5) Referring Foster Grandparents to project staff for possible reassignment, transfer, or termination.

6) Carrying out other responsibilities as identified.

### VOLUNTEER STATION RESPONSIBILITIES CONCERNING TRANSPORTATION

Volunteer stations are responsible for arranging Foster Grandparent travel between different assignments with the same station and for associated costs, unless otherwise provided in the Memorandum of Understanding.

Other volunteer station responsibilities:

1) Assisting in the provision of appropriate volunteer recognition activities.

2) Providing for volunteer safety.

3) Keeping records and preparing reports required by the sponsor, including:

a) FGP volunteer timesheets.

b) Updates and accomplishments relating to the written volunteer Assignment Plans.

c) Data and information to document and report accomplishments and impacts for the children and other data needed for FGP Progress Reports.

d) FGP volunteer performance reports.

e) Testimonials and examples of how Foster Grandparents meet the needs and improve the lives of children served as well as of impact on the capabilities of the volunteer station and its staff to carry out the station’s mission and/or achieve its goals, objectives, responsibilities to clients, etc.

### PREPARATION OF THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

The Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which must be negotiated prior to placing volunteers, describes program requirements, working relationships, and mutual responsibilities between the sponsor and the volunteer station. The Memorandum of Understanding includes general conditions applicable to all projects and volunteer stations and special conditions applicable to the local volunteer station.

### MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING RENEGOTIATING AND UPDATING

The Memorandum of Understanding must be reviewed and renegotiated at least every three years. The Memorandum of Understanding may be amended at any time by mutual agreement. The effective date of a new Memorandum of Understanding must be on or after the date the Memorandum of Understanding is signed. Projects are encouraged to require volunteer stations to notify them as soon as any circumstances arise which could affect or require changing the provisions of the Memorandum of Understanding, such as the volunteer station’s ability to meet commitments for providing specified contributions toward project costs, changes in the sites where FGP volunteers serve, or other conditions which have a bearing on volunteer assignments*.*

### FOSTER GRANDPARENT ASSIGNMENTS

Foster Grandparent projects will develop volunteer assignments in alignment with FGP performance measure work plans and outcomes and will do so prior to the recruitment of FGP volunteers. FGP volunteer assignments should incorporate how the assignment will support performance goals and the service described in the proposed work plans. Assignments serve the dual purpose of providing a high-quality experience for volunteers and meeting the critical needs of children and youth served.

Volunteer station professional staff select the children to be served and prepare a volunteer Assignment Plan, approved by the FGP project director, for the Foster Grandparents to use as a guide in serving their assigned children. Confidentiality concerning the identity and needs of the specific children served must be respected. For reasons of confidentiality a pseudonym may be used to identify individual children. All placements’ assignments must meet the following criteria:

1. Provide for Foster Grandparents to give direct services to one or more eligible children.
2. Result in person-to-person supportive relationships with each child served.
3. Foster Grandparent Program volunteers cannot be assigned to roles such as teacher's aides, group leaders or other similar positions that would detract from the person-to-person relationship.

(c) Support the development and growth of each child served.

(d) Be meaningful to the Foster Grandparent.

(e) Be supported by appropriate orientation, training, and supervision.

Required written volunteer Assignment Plan:

(a) All Foster Grandparent Program volunteers shall receive a written volunteer Assignment Plan developed by the volunteer station that:

(1) Is approved by the sponsor and accepted by the Foster Grandparent;

(2) Identifies the individual child(ren) or pseudonym to be served;

(3) Identifies the role and activities of the Foster Grandparent and expected outcomes for the child(ren);

(4) Addresses the period of time each child(ren) should receive such services; and

(5) Is used to review the impact of the assignment on the child(ren).

Foster Grandparents may assist small groups when, by doing so, they can continue to directly serve the needs of their assigned children. Such as when the assigned child is a part of a small group or when socialization is an outcome objective for the child.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Appropriate Assignments | Inappropriate Assignments |
| Encouraging the social and emotional development of disadvantaged young children | Answering telephones in the front office |
| Reading to a child in a Head Start program | Preparing classroom materials or performing other teacher’s-aide activities |
| Teaching English to a child for whom it is a second language | Being solely responsible for watching children while a teacher or instructor is otherwise engaged |
| Tutoring disadvantaged youth towards GED completion | Any role that would otherwise be performed by an employed worker |

### SELECTION OF ASSIGNMENTS

1) Assignments and terms of service, including the service schedule, should reflect individual Foster Grandparent preferences and skill set along with the needs of children. Project and volunteer station staff should ensure that a range of service opportunities are available to provide a choice of assignments for Foster Grandparents.

2) Because Foster Grandparents are a limited resource, assignments should be carefully selected, taking into account outcomes objectives for children with special and exceptional needs, or in circumstances that limit their academic, social, or emotional development, such as their potential to achieve significant improvements in their lives.

### CHILDREN SERVED BY FOSTER GRANDPARENTS

1) Children assigned to Foster Grandparents must be under 21 years of age

2) When a Foster Grandparent is assigned to a child with a disability, the assignment may continue beyond the child's 21st birthday, provided the following conditions specified in 45 CFR 2552.82 are met:

a) The Foster Grandparent was assigned to the child before the child reached 21 years of age.

b) The volunteer station professional staff responsible for the child's care certifies that continued assignment is in the best interest of both the Foster Grandparent and the child.

c) The Foster Grandparent, sponsor, volunteer station professional staff, and the child's parent or person legally responsible for the child, agree to the continued assignment.

3) In cases where the assigned Foster Grandparent becomes unavailable to serve a particular individual with a disability, the sponsor may select another Foster Grandparent to continue the service.

### SELECTION OF CHILDREN TO BE SERVED

Volunteer station professional staff are responsible for, and project staff must concur in, the selection of individual children to be served by each Foster Grandparent in accordance with the criteria and definitions in the FGP regulations for children with special needs, children having exceptional needs, or children in circumstances that limit their academic, social, or emotional development. In an educational setting, the professional may be an educator, counselor, or other appropriate professional. In a health setting, the professional may be a physician, psychiatrist, psychologist, registered nurse or licensed practical nurse, physical therapist, or similar professional. In these and other settings, the primary requirement is that the person evaluating the child's need has had professional training in a field directly related to the child's need.

### TERMINATION OF ASSIGNMENTS

1. When possible, plans should be made to phase out the Foster Grandparent to child relationship gradually to avoid a sudden disruption. Under the following conditions, discontinuance of a relationship should be arranged with the guidance of volunteer station professional staff when :

a) A child's need for individual attention through a person-to-person relationship diminishes.

b) A relationship is no longer satisfying for the Foster Grandparent.

c) A child becomes unmanageable in terms of size, strength, or behavior.

d) A child reaches age 21 (see “CHILDREN SERVED BY FOSTER GRANDPARENTS” above).

e) Conflict between the Foster Grandparent and the child's parent is apparent.

2) Regardless of the cause of termination of an assignment, the decision must be made jointly by project and volunteer station staff, with input of the Foster Grandparent, if appropriate.

3) Sponsors are asked to keep the AmeriCorps program officer/portfolio manager fully informed in cases of terminations, voluntary or otherwise, that have potential legal implications for FGP staff or the project.

### FGP VOLUNTEER COST REIMBURSEMENTS

Foster Grandparent's cost reimbursements are not subject to any tax/charge or treated as wages or compensation for the purposes of unemployment insurance, worker's compensation, temporary disability, retirement, public assistance, or similar benefit payments or minimum wage laws. Cost reimbursements and benefits are not subject to garnishment and do not reduce or eliminate the level of, or eligibility for, assistance or services a Foster Grandparent may be receiving under any governmental program. The amount of reimbursement made to FGP volunteers is determined by the availability of funds and project’s written policy regarding reimbursement of volunteer expenses.

FGP volunteers serve a minimum of 5 hours a week, up to 40 hours/week and receive a tax-free "stipend". The stipend is payable monthly at a rate of $ 4 per hour of FGP volunteer service. Monthly timesheets are due 10 days after the beginning of the month. Payment of the stipend is provided via direct deposit. All the following activities are considered "stipend". FGP volunteers should document all that apply on their monthly timesheets:

Client Contact Time Personal Leave Day

Annual In-service Training Bereavement Leave

Recognition Events Supervisory Meetings

Holidays Pre-Service Orientation

Paid Time Off

### MEAL REIMBURSEMENT

Nutrition is an important part of the volunteer’s wellbeing. Most volunteer stations provide a meal to the Foster Grandparent at no charge. When the volunteer eats with the children and uses mealtime for additional instruction (such as table manners or taking turns, etc.), the meal is considered part of the time reported for stipend. However, if the Foster Grandparent does not eat with the children, the time is considered a lunch break and is not reported for payment of the stipend. Reimbursement for meals is provided while taken on assignment, within limits of the project's available resources.

### TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT

Travel time between the volunteer's home and place of assignment is not considered as part of the service schedule and is not stipended. However, travel time between assignments is a part of the service schedule and is stipended.

1) Reimbursement of FGP volunteers who drive their own cars is based on a cost-per-mile GSA rate set by the US General Services Administration. FGP volunteers are reimbursed for actual mileage within the limits of available funds and local project reimbursement policy. FGP volunteers cannot be reimbursed in excess of actual costs, or on a per capita basis, for transporting other volunteers.

2) Mileage reimbursement directly to an FGP volunteer from a volunteer station for transportation from the volunteer's home to the place of assignment and return home is acceptable as local support of the FGP project.

3) Mileage reimbursement to FGP volunteers from volunteer stations for providing transportation while on volunteer assignments cannot be used as local support of the FGP project. FGP cannot accept responsibility for the costs of community service provided by volunteer stations and, therefore, cannot be credited for the value of those costs to be used as local budget support.

*Note: Transporting a Client in your own personal vehicle is not reimbursable by the program.*

Appropriate volunteer activities for which travel is reimbursed may include round trip travel to/from:

School visits Supervisory meetings

Pre-approved in-services Recognition events

Travel time from one Station to another Station is part of service schedule and *IS* c*overed* by the hourly stipend. A maximum of 30 minutes may be allowed (with stipend) for back-to-back travel.

### NON-REIMBURSED VOLUNTEER EXPENSES

FGP volunteer expense items, including transportation to and from their assignments, meals taken during assignments, recognition activities, and recognition items (which are purchased at the volunteers’ own expense and not reimbursed by the project to the volunteer) are not allowable as contributions to the non-Federal share of the budget.

### VOLUNTEER DRIVERS - PROOF OF DRIVERS’ LICENSE/INSURANCE

FGP volunteers who use their personal vehicles to drive from home to their place of assignment or in connection with program-related activities must keep their auto liability insurance in effect for their own protection. Proof of a valid driver’s license and current auto insurance coverage is required prior to serving as a volunteer. If/when a driver’s license expires and/or auto insurance coverage is not renewed, the volunteer must notify the Coordinator and begin utilizing public modes of transportation (ex: bus, senior ride service, etc.) to get to/from assigned stations(s). Cost for use of public transportation is reimbursable by the program within the limits of available funds.

### INSURANCE COVERAGE

The program regulations require FGP volunteers be provided with accident insurance, personal liability insurance, and excess automobile liability insurance. The minimum levels of this insurance are specified by AmeriCorps and may be subject to change from time to time. The insurance coverage must be in excess of and noncontributing to any other valid and collectible insurance the volunteers have. In other words, the accident and excess automobile liability coverage are intended to provide higher levels of insurance for volunteers, starting where other insurance coverage for them stops. The AmeriCorps required insurance is excess insurance not primary insurance. This is also true for personal liability; but volunteers are often not covered by personal liability insurance, in which case the AmeriCorps required personal liability insurance shall become primary insurance with no deductible conferred to or paid by volunteers.

### ACCIDENT INSURANCE - WHILE ON DUTY

Accident insurance must cover FGP volunteers for personal injury during travel between their homes and places of assignment, during their volunteer service, during meal periods while serving as a volunteer, and while attending project-sponsored activities. Protection shall be provided against claims in excess of any benefits or services for medical care or treatment available to the volunteer from other sources, including:

1. Health insurance coverage.

2. Other hospital or medical service plans.

3. Any coverage under labor-management trusted plans, union-welfare plans, employer organization plans, or employee-benefit organization plans.

4. Coverage under any governmental program or provided by any statute.

When benefits are approved in the form of services rather than cash payments, the reasonable cash value of each service rendered must be considered in determining the applicability of this provision. The benefits payable must include the benefits that would have been payable had a claim been duly made. The benefits payable must be reduced to the extent necessary so that the sum of such reduced benefits and all the benefits provided for by any other plan must not exceed the volunteer's total expenses. The sponsor must provide AmeriCorps volunteers with the following accident insurance coverage:

* $50,000 or more for accidental medical expenses
* $2,500 for accidental death or dismemberment
* Requirements for additional insurance vary year to year

If questions about current policy, contact the FGP staff and ask about relevant policies.

### PERSONAL LIABILITY INSURANCE FOR VOLUNTEERS

Protection is provided against claims in excess of protection provided by other insurance. It does not include professional liability coverage. The sponsor must provide third-party protection for volunteers against injury or property damage claims arising out of their volunteer service activities. For each sponsoring organization, the amount of protection must be $1,000,000 for each occurrence of personal injury or property damage and must be in excess of any other valid and collectible insurance, and $3,000,000 annual aggregate.

### EXCESS AUTOMOBILE LIABILITY INSURANCE

To avoid a gap in coverage between that provided by a volunteer’s personal vehicle insurance and liability claims in excess of that coverage, the sponsor must provide Excess Automobile Liability Insurance coverage of not less than $500,000 each accident for bodily injury and/or property damage.

The sponsor will provide protection against claims in excess of the greater of either:

1. The liability insurance volunteers carry on their own automobiles.

2. The limits of the applicable state Motor Vehicle Financial Responsibility Law.

3. Requirements for additional insurance vary year to year.

If questions about current policy, contact the FGP staff and ask about relevant policies.

### POLICIES FOR VOLUNTEERS WHILE AT THE VOLUNTEER STATION

Phone calls and texts should be kept to a minimal emergency use during scheduled hours. Cell phone ringtones should be turned off at the site, but calls can be placed or received when outside the classroom on break. Family members can also reach the volunteer in an emergency by calling the building office.

* FGP volunteers may not send personal e-mails or converse on Facebook or other social media during the volunteer assignment.
* Site computers cannot be used for personal business.
* FGP volunteers should determine the dress code at the volunteer station and abide by that dress code.
* FGP volunteers should abide by all volunteer station policies.

If in doubt, contact the FGP staff and ask about relevant policies.

### UNIFORMS OR SMOCKS

When volunteer stations require FGP volunteers to wear special uniforms or smocks, the cost of uniforms and laundering are an allowable project cost when these expenses are described in the Memorandum of Understanding with the volunteer station, sufficient funds are available to cover these expenses, and all other requirements identified in the Notice of Grant Award are met. Otherwise, volunteer stations are responsible for such costs.

### CLOTHING AND BRANDED GEAR

Many AmeriCorps Senior grantees want to use clothing to highlight the volunteers’ participation in the Foster Grandparent Program. Items like clothing, bags, hats, or other gear with the AmeriCorps program names and logos that are not required by the project or volunteer station are considered recognition of service.

### PROHIBITED ACTIVITIES

Foster Grandparents do not serve as paid staff, babysitter, supervisor, substitute teacher, or disciplinarian. Foster Grandparents may gently correct a child’s inappropriate behavior; however, volunteers are not to assign consequences or punishments to children for their negative behavior. This is the teacher’s responsibility. A Foster Grandparent cannot be left in charge or without supervision by volunteer station staff. Any suspected abuse/neglect is to be reported to the teacher.

A Foster Grandparent can never use punishment; be physically or verbally abusive; give gifts, food, or money; take children from the volunteer station; do clerical work; prepare meals or clean up (unless children participate in the activity); carry food trays; discuss religious beliefs or participate in religious education classes; drive a child in the volunteer’s automobile or take responsibility for a child off-site. A Foster Grandparent should not assist children in the bathroom (Foster Grandparents can escort children TO the bathroom).

### GIFTS/COMPENSATION FOR SERVICE

Foster Grandparent services are free of charge to all program recipients. Therefore, volunteers should not accept payment for services or gifts from Clients or the families of Clients. Those wishing to make a contribution may make a donation directly to the program to help fund services in their community.

Please have the Client or families of Clients contact the FGP staff to ask about how to make a donation.

### POLITICAL

Foster Grandparents, when “on duty” as Foster Grandparents, “off duty” while representing themselves as Foster Grandparents or in a situation where they may be perceived as representing themselves as Foster Grandparents, may not:

* Influence the outcome of any election to public office.
* Engage in voter registration activity.
* Transport voters to polls or similar assistance in connection with an election.
* Influence the passage or defeat of legislation or proposals.

### RELIGIOUS

Project staff or volunteers do not give religious instruction, conduct worship services or engage in proselytization as part of their duties and, if the sponsor is an organization that conducts inherently religions activities, those activities are offered separately, in time and location, from the programs or services receiving funding by AmeriCorps.

### SELLING/SOLICITING

Foster Grandparents may not sell to or solicit from Clients.

### NON-DISPLACEMENT OF EMPLOYMENT

FGP volunteers may not perform any service or duty or engage in any activity which would otherwise be performed by an employed worker, or which would supplant the hiring of employed workers.

### LABOR AND ANTI-LABOR ACTIVITIES

FGP volunteers may not directly or indirectly be involved with labor or anti-labor organizing or related activities.

### CONFIDENTIALITY (HIPAA/Privacy Rule)

The HIPAA Privacy Rule provides federal protections for personal health information held by covered entities and gives patients an array of rights with respect to that information. At the same time, the Privacy Rule is balanced so that it permits the disclosure of personal health information needed for patient care and other important purposes.

Confidentiality is a serious matter. Everyone has the right to his/her own privacy. Breaking confidentiality occurs when you talk about a Client with anyone who is not directly associated with providing Client care or services. This includes your family/friends/neighbors, the Client’s neighbors, other Clients you may be serving or anyone else that a Client has not given you permission to speak to on their behalf. Contact your Volunteer Station Supervisor or Coordinator to discuss client changes, suspicion of abuse/neglect or any matter that may impact the well-being of the Client or your ability to provide services. When in doubt, it is best not to give information about a Client to anyone without first checking with the volunteer Station Supervisor.

### TELEPHONE NUMBER

FGP volunteers may give their phone number out to clients as deemed necessary by school officials.

### SMOKING

While volunteers are with Clients a no-smoking policy is required. It is also encouraged that the volunteer exercise good judgment should smoking be desired between Client visits (short-time period).

### DISCIPLINARY ACTION

FGP volunteers are expected to demonstrate appropriate behavior and conduct during Client visits. Engaging in activities that put the health/safety of a Client at risk not tolerated and will lead to a volunteer’s immediate dismissal from the program. Examples of such activities include, but are not limited to:

* Refusal to follow program policies.
* Falsification of records (timesheets, paperwork, etc).
* Not respecting Client boundaries or right to confidentiality.
* Theft of property.
* Threat of or act of doing bodily harm to Clients.
* Willful or negligent destruction of property.
* Being under the influence of drugs or alcohol while on duty.
* Unauthorized possession of illegal firearms, weapons, or explosives on Agency or Client property.
* Abuse, neglect, or endangerment of a Client.
* Threatening, intimidating, or coercing Clients or staff.
* Negligence or careless action, which endangers the Client’s safety.

### EXITING THE PROGRAM

Exit from the program is based on a volunteer’s willingness and ability to perform the volunteer role in a way that is safe and in the best interest of the volunteer and clients served. When volunteers choose to exit the program, a two-week advanced notice to the Volunteer Station and Coordinator is requested, whenever possible. At this time, an exit interview between the volunteer and Coordinator will be completed.

### DISMISSAL

Volunteerism and compensation with ND Senior Career Development is “at will”. A volunteer can be terminated with or without cause, and with or without notice, at any time, at the option of the Agency.

### GROUNDS FOR REMOVAL

Grounds for removal include but are not limited to:

Extensive and unauthorized absences; misconduct; failure to perform assignments or failure to accept supervision. A Foster Grandparent may also be removed from stipended service for having income in excess of the eligibility level. A Foster Grandparent shall be removed immediately if ineligible to serve based on criminal history check results. The sponsor shall establish appropriate policies on removal from service, as well as procedures for appeal.

### GRIEVANCE POLICY

In the event that a volunteer is dismissed from the program, he/she has the right to an appeal using the following process: (1) Send a written letter of appeal to the Program Director within 7 business days explaining your complaint and how you would like the situation resolved; (2) Within 10 business days of receiving your letter of appeal, the Program Director and FGP Staff will meet to discuss and resolve the situation. A written decision will be mailed to you within 5 business days of the meeting taking place; (3) Should you disagree with the decision made by the Program Director and FGP Staff, you have the right to file a written report to the Agency’s CEO within 10 business days from the date of the original grievance letter to explain your reason for dissatisfaction; (4) The CEO’s final decision will be sent to you in writing within 10 business days from receiving the request.

### STIPEND PAY OWED TO A DECEASED FOSTER GRANDPARENT

If a Foster Grandparent dies, any earned but unpaid stipend will be paid to the beneficiary listed on their volunteer information update form. To change the beneficiary, contact the office at 701 483 5335.

### INFORMATION CHANGE FORM

Documentation of the FGP emergency contact, beneficiary (for supplemental insurance coverage purposes), interests, special needs & availability can be made on the “Volunteer Information Update Form”. You may request this form by calling or emailing the FGP Staff listed in the welcome letter at the beginning of this handbook.

### WORKERS COMPENSATION

FGP volunteers ***are not***employees and ***are not***covered by Federal or state workers’ compensation insurance.

### INCOME REVIEW

In order to receive stipend, a volunteer cannot have an annual income from all sources (after deducting allowable health expenses) which exceeds 200% of current federal poverty guidelines.

### DRIVING RECORD/INSURANCE

FGP volunteers who use a personal vehicle to drive to/from their training site must verify that they have a valid license, minimum liability insurance and safe driving record. Per Agency requirements, a check of the volunteer’s motor vehicle record will be completed annually.

### OBSERVED HOLIDAYS

Foster Grandparents with ND Senior Career Development observes the following twelve (12) holidays for all volunteers:

New Year’s Day Martin Luther King Jr. Day Presidents Day Memorial Day Juneteenth Independence Day Labor Day Columbus Day Veteran's Day Thanksgiving Day Day after Thanksgiving Christmas Day

Foster Grandparent volunteers will receive 5 hours for unworked holidays.

### PAID TIME OFF (PTO)

FGP volunteers earn 5 hours paid time off (PTO) each month a volunteer is actively working under an approved Assignment Plan and/or continuing training. FGP volunteers earn 5 hours of PTO at the beginning of every month. Common reasons to use PTO hours include, but are not limited to, sick or vacation time, funeral leave and/or a leave of absence. At the discretion of program staff, it may also be used to help a volunteer reach the required 5 hours of services a week.

PTO can be used when the volunteer chooses - up to 5 hours of PTO per day. The daily allowance of PTO available to be used is based on the average hours of volunteering the Foster Grandparent is completing each day. When using PTO, volunteers must document the hours on their monthly timesheet and are responsible for notifying Volunteer Station Supervisor of their absence.

Upon request, volunteers can receive an update of their current PTO balance. PTO will not be carried over to the next fiscal year, and all un-used PTO will be paid out at the end of the fiscal year. Upon exiting the program, unused PTO will be paid to Volunteers in their final check.

You may request your current PTO balance by calling or emailing the FGP Staff listed in the welcome letter at the beginning of this handbook.

### BEREAVEMENT LEAVE

FGP volunteers may receive up to 4 hours of stipend for attending the funeral and/or memorial service of a family member. Please notify your Coordinator when this occurs. Hours are documented on your timesheet as “Bereavement”.

### JURY DUTY

If a volunteer is called to Jury Duty he/she will be excused from their volunteer role for the required time without stipend, since a per diem amount is paid to jurors by the court system.

### LEAVE OF ABSENCE

A leave of absence may be granted when a volunteer needs to leave the program for 30 to 180 days. A “Leave of Absence Request” form must be submitted to the Program Director prior to the leave of absence taking place, when possible.

A leave of absence may be granted only after all PTO has been used. During a leave of absence, additional PTO will not be accrued, and volunteers will not receive holiday pay, stipend, or travel reimbursement for Client contact or In-service participation. When possible and appropriate, Clients may be temporarily reassigned to an alternate volunteer during a leave of absence.

*Note: Those taking a leave of absence for more than 180 days must reapply to the program prior to returning.*

### WEATHER

When volunteers feel it is unsafe to travel in their community and a no-travel advisory has *NOT* been issued, they should attempt to reschedule their client visits or use PTO for time missed. If conditions in your community make travel unsafe (e.g., blizzards, ice storms, heavy rain, flooding, etc.) and a NO-TRAVEL ADVISORY *has been* issued, the program staff may make the decision to pay the effected volunteers stipend for time missed. Please note, this applies only when days of volunteering is missed and is considered on a case per case basis by the Program Director. The total number of stipend hours received for time missed will be determined by program staff based on documentation from MOU and timesheets. In the event of any other weather disaster or catastrophe and the station is shut down notify the Program Director as soon as possible.

### TIMESHEETS

Timesheets are a federal requirement and are the means by which the monthly stipends are paid. The timesheet is completed and signed by the volunteer, then reviewed and signed by the supervisor at the volunteer site. FGP volunteers can mail them or scan and email them to any of the FGP Staff listed in the welcome letter at the beginning of this handbook.

Timesheets are used to document the total number of hours a volunteer has served his/her Clients per "service month" meals and travel costs accrued for providing Client services. The time spent with a Client each week should correspond with what is documented on the MOU as much as possible, but is subject to change with volunteer Station Supervisor approval. New timesheets are available upon request. Please call or email your request to any of the FGP Staff listed in the welcome letter at the beginning of this handbook.

FGP volunteers are responsible for completing their own timesheets as well as signing, dating and submitting them to their volunteer Station Supervisor the last day of each month. Upon review and signature, the volunteer Station Supervisor will send approved timesheets to FGP Staff for processing.

Total monthly stipend meals and travel reimbursement are paid jointly with your monthly timesheet hours as a direct deposit which are due the 10th of the following month.

### TIMESHEET INSTRUCTIONS:

*ONLY use PEN when filling out your time sheet. Do not use pencil.*

*Print your name and the name of your volunteer site at the top.*

Fill in the hours you volunteer each day under the number of hours for the day column. Do not wait until the end of the month. If you wait until the end of the month, you may not be able to accurately remember what days and how long you served. The hours served should always be in whole hours or quarter hours, so round up or down as needed. If a Grandparent serves 4 hours and 5 minutes, it will be just “4.” Don’t write the word “hrs” or anything besides a number. If the Grandparent serves 4 hours and 15 minutes, it is rounded and written as “4.25.” The hours served must reflect the actual hours on the job, and mealtime can only be counted if the Foster Grandparent is eating with the children.

Training Hours are the in-service trainings provided by the program, training provided by the volunteer site, or other training in the community which has been approved by the Program Director for training hours. For in-service days, all Foster Grandparents who attend in-service training meetings will record actual time spent training when in attendance and then record hours as a line item.

PTO/Leave Time should be used if the Foster Grandparent wants to use any leave time which is available to him/her. The number of hours should be the same as the number the Foster Grandparent would normally have served on that day. The daily allowance of PTO available to be used is based on the average hours of volunteering the Foster Grandparent is completing each day. Indicate number of hours as a line item on your timesheet.

Closed Due to Weather - When school in your town has a late start or is cancelled for the day and Foster Grandparents do not to go to their volunteer site, record the number of hours you normally would have served on that day. Indicate number of hours as a line item on your timesheet. If you were at your site and left early due to weather, put the hours served and make a note on your timesheet.

Holiday hours will be paid to any Foster Grandparent serving hours in that month. You will be paid 8 hours for the holiday. We have listed approved Foster Grandparent holidays in the handbook, please see “OBSERVED HOLIDAYS” section. If your site has a holiday not included on this list, you may use leave. You can only be paid a maximum of 40 hours during the week. This includes hours served and time off. If you don’t serve on the holiday, don’t mark anything on your time sheet. We will take care of marking your holiday hours.

Auto Miles (AS FUNDING ALLOWS) Only Foster Grandparents who drive to and from their volunteer site will use this column. Foster Grandparents driving to in-service training should also record their miles in this column and indicate in-service training as a line item. Write in start and end odometer reading and how many miles driven round trip each day. It is important to note when you drive so that mileage can be paid.

Free Meal - Something must be written in this box for every day the Grandparent serves. If no meals were eaten, write in “0.” If you had one free meal that day, write in “1.” If you had both breakfast and lunch, write in “2.” Please don’t leave this box blank, because the Program must track the meals provided to the Grandparents as in-kind from the volunteer station site.

Signatures - The timesheet is not valid and cannot be processed without two signatures at the bottom. First, the Foster Grandparent must sign. Second, someone who is supervising the Foster Grandparent who has knowledge of the days and hours served must sign. Usually, this will be the classroom teacher, but the Principal or Director of the volunteer station site can sign it or designate someone else (such as the School Secretary) to sign. It must be dated by last service day of the month. Signatures verifying the hours are a federal requirement.

Turning in the Timesheet – Either the volunteer or someone at the volunteer station can turn in the volunteer timesheet. Timesheets can either be mailed or scanned and emailed to any of the FGP Staff listed in the welcome letter at the beginning of this handbook.

It is the Foster Grandparent’s responsibility to send in the time sheet or make sure someone at your site sends in your time sheet. If we don’t receive the time sheet by the 10th of the following month, your stipend deposit may be delayed. A copy of all time sheets should be kept at the volunteer station where both the Foster Grandparent and staff have access to them. If you are gone the last serving day of the month, be sure to call your volunteer site to remind them to send us your time sheet.

### IN-KIND CONTRIBUTION

FGP volunteer station may contribute to the financial support of the FGP project. However, this support shall not be a required precondition for a potential station to obtain FGP volunteers. If a volunteer station agrees to provide funds to support additional volunteers or pay for other volunteer support costs, the agreement must be stated in the written Memorandum of Understanding with the station. Documentation for in-kind contributions must record donation and valuation of each item.

### FOSTER GRANDPARENT PROGRAM HANDBOOK RECEIPT AND AGREEMENT

I have participated in orientation on the Foster Grandparent Handbook and have received a copy of the Handbook. I understand that this Handbook summarizes the Programs guidelines, and that it is furnished to me solely for my information.

I further understand that volunteering with Foster Grandparent Program is not for a specified term and is at the mutual consent of me and the Program.

I further understand that the statements contained in the Handbook are not intended to create any contractual or other legal obligations. I also understand that the Program may modify or rescind any of its policies, or practices described in the Handbook at any time, except for those policies required by law.

I acknowledge that it is my responsibility to read, become familiar with, and abide by the contents and policies set forth in this Handbook.

I understand and agree to abide by all **confidentiality policies** set forth in this handbook and I understand that failure to follow said confidentiality policies will result in termination from the Foster Grandparent Program.

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Signature of the Foster Grandparent

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Date